12: Faron E-4, 5 (1952-1954) 1964
SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

supernatural events and forces (e.g. as indicated by their dreams and, perhaps, visions). They also take any promising young girl into their house for training, for which they are paid well. But girls who have recovered from serious illness under the *machi*'s care are considered prime material as trainees, since during their sickness they have already dealt successfully with supernatural agents—a demonstration of their courageousness and sensitivity. It is said that a *machi* will sometimes coerce a young girl whom she has cured into becoming a trainee. *Machi* acknowledge that this sometimes happens, saying that they do this primarily to keep their profession alive for the good of the people, and that they select the most suitable girls to this end.

One *machi*, who was a particular friend of mine, was training one of her three daughters along with two other girls, both distantly related to her through the distaff side of her family. The story of her own calling into the profession follows:

When I was a young girl I was very sick and almost died. I had large boils all over my body [showing arms and legs] and in my hair. My family was very poor. My mother was a machi, but she had little success and did not control powerful spirits. Because of this she was unable to cure me. I recovered through my own power and from what I had learned from my mother. I did not have her knowledge, but I had more power.

One day I was tending the sheep when I saw a pure-white lamb walk out of the bushes toward me. The lamb followed me all over. Suddenly, I saw a large kultrun [drum] over the bushes. It was covered with a pure-white lamb skin and there was a blue and white drumstick with bells attached to it. I decided that this vision was presented to me so that I would become a machi. I talked about this with my mother, but she did not know what to do. She felt that her powers were failing and that she could not instruct me properly. My mother later became a great machi, but now she is too old to practice anymore.

I was sick with boils again, but this time I was able to do my work. I decided to go and get cured by a famous machi in Maquegua, near my natal reservation [a woman who was her mother's mother's maternal aunt]. Because my father was very poor, his brothers and sisters contributed to the cost of my cure and training. The machi who taught me asked for 600

12: Faron E-4, 5 (1952-1954) 1964
SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

756 159 pesos [a very large sum of money twenty years ago], a new house with room enough for me to sleep alone, and some sheep. I stayed with her for several years and learned a good deal. I was a good pupil, but she did not teach me everything she knew. After about five years I was ready. I was almost as good as my teacher, because I had special power that she did not have. I called on my own powerful pillan. [Asked about this in detail, she said the following.] My mother told me that the women in our family numbered machi among them, and that it was their spirits who possessed me and made me wise.

Now I am successful and make a lot of money. It is not easy to be a machi. People think it is easy, and they say that the machi is rich and fat and does not have to work. But my husband works as hard as any man. I work harder than other women. When I am possessed by a spirit, I am close to death. It is dangerous and I do not like to do it. Young machi, as I did myself, like to have the spirits enter them because it is exciting, but I am getting older now and more careful. My house burned down last year, and even the orchard was damaged. I know the evil spirit responsible for this. Long ago I cured a man, but he would not pay me what I asked, and then he died. Now his spirit has been captured by a kalku and sent to fight me.

The story of how a male *machi* began is also of interest:

I was born blind, and they call me waillepen. My mother died because of me. I was raised by my father's sister who lived with us. My father died when I was small, and all my brothers and sisters died. My father's sister married a poor man who came to live in my father's house. He was a bad man. People called him a kalku, but he did not have any power. He was just mean. The people chased him away, though, and we all went with him. We lived in Boroa until I was a young man. There my stepfather had an uncle who was a machi and who talked often with me. I learned a lot from him, but I had no power. I never dreamed.

I used to walk a good deal, and one day I kept on walking. I finally walked as far as Argentina and all through Chile as far as Puerto Montt. I have crossed the Andes many times. I heard many things in the houses where I lodged. I worked for people making spoons, baskets, and all sorts of things. I can weave better than a woman, but they have to show me where the colors are.

12: Faron E-4, 5 (1952-1954) 1964
SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

One night I dreamed that I could see. I had this dream for several months, then I lost it. It bothered me no longer to have this good dream. I finally went back to Boroa to see my laku [father's uncle] and found that he had died. I wanted him to explain things to me. I told another machi about my dream, and she liked it. I stayed with her for several years, but never slept with her. She taught me many things.

Gradually, I began to have power. I began dreaming again, and used to dream about my laku, the machi. The woman I was with did not like this; she thought it was dangerous. So I left her. I kept on having dreams, and I began to learn what they were about. I began to work cures on sick people, although I did not know any remedies. I made a drum which I beat at night. After this, my dreams were more powerful than ever before. I felt power, and used it to cure sick people where I stayed. I finally came to Pelehue [Toltén], where I married a widow with children—these. Now I have several children by my own semen. My wife has died. I could not save her. Maybe I am losing my power. My daughter [stepdaughter] and her husband live with me and take care of things.

I do not cure any more. I do not know much about remedies. I only cure very sick people, like the crazy boy who lives near where you and your wife stay. I made two holes in his head to let out the wekufe. I think they are still with him. He was very crazy and very sick all the time, and the doctor [Chilean] could not help him. He came to me and I cured him in a month, but he is getting sick again. He is crazy. I have no patience with plants and rubbing the body like a matrona. Men are more powerful machi than women. They are not afraid to talk to the spirits. I talk with them at night. I frequently have very good dreams.

This *machi* also said that he had been possessed only a few times, and that his greatest power lay in dreaming and communing with the *pillan*. He would visit a very sick person in his house, remain with him until he had a powerful dream, and then cure according to the dictates of the dream—cures which often required bloodletting and surgery. He continually maintained that his power lay outside himself.

Ordinary illnesses, such as colds, light fever, broken bones, and so on, are either treated at home by a *matrona*, or by a Chilean clinician in town, both of whom charge less than a machi.

12: Faron E-4, 5 (1952-1954) 1964
SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

operations, merely the shaman's professional knowledge. There are many old men and women who have a store of knowledge about medicinal plants which vies with that of the *machi*, but they have no power and receive no payment for their assistance. 755 756

When illness is serious, especially of a very painful nature or accompanied by high fever, a *machi* will be called in by the person's family to make a diagnosis and effect a cure. This involves a fairly elaborate ceremony (*machitun* or *pillantun*) which may last a day or more. *Machi* are well rewarded for their services when successful, but their reputation suffers when they fail. People become suspicious of them if they have a series of failures. For this reason a *machi* will be very careful to diagnose illness before attempting a cure. If she decides that the patient is likely to recover if properly treated, she will proceed with the cure. If the patient seems too near death, the *machi* will often decline to take the case and beg off on the grounds that she has been called in too late or even that she is not sure her power is strong enough. This calculated bit of honesty raises the percentage of her cures and, as well, her status in the community.

The reaction to a shaman is recorded in the following vignette as told by a man of about fifty-five years of age: 755 756 159.

Many years ago I was very sick. They called a machi to hold a machitun. She came and looked me all over. There were many of my father's brothers present who talked to the machi about me and the ceremony. All of them agreed that a machitun should be held.

The machi gave orders to the thungulmachin to bring herbs, urine, canelo leaves, and other things from her house to my father's. Meanwhile, they danced around the house and shouted at the wekufe. All the while they drank a lot of chicha to make the cure effective. The machi drank and smoked her pipe.

I was very sick that night. The next day the thungulmachin returned with the things he was sent for. I was made to inhale chili-pepper smoke to clear my head and lungs. The machi rubbed me with the sacred leaves and putrid urine. She prayed over me for two days. I became worse. They chased the machi away when she told them they had not called her in time, and they did not pay her. They called a priest of the church [Catholic] who came the next day to see me. That night, before he came, I saw an anchimallen. It was standing in a [787]

12: Faron E-4, 5 (1952-1954) 1964
SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

755 corner of the house looking directly at me. Nobody else saw it.
756 I was too sick to tell them it was there. It wore a coffee-colored
•159 chamal wrapped around it, long hair which reached almost to
789 the ground, and it was very ugly. It was no more than two feet high.

When I finally told my father that I had seen the anchimallen, he became very excited and wanted to recall the machi. The others told him it would be better to wait for the priest, since the machi would not return to the house where she was insulted. My father compromised. He said that he wanted to get me out of the house, away from the anchimallen, to another house where the machi would visit if the priest failed to come. They carried me to my uncle's house, which was nearby. It is there that the priest came to see me the next day. After talking to the priest and taking the medicine he gave me, I never saw the anchimallen again. The priest chased it away with the cross and the Bible. I have never seen the wekufe since.

755 The greatest danger in all cases of serious illness is "soul-
[753] loss." Because of the weakened condition of the person in either illness or sleep, the soul (*am*) is exposed to the forces of evil, which may capture it. Fever is often felt to be caused by the grappling between the soul and these extraneous forces. The *machi* dispels the evil, reduces the fever. First she diagnoses the exact cause of illness. The exactness of diagnosis is one thing which serves to differentiate her from other practitioners, such as *matronas* and Chilean doctors. If the *wekufe* possess the body, the *machi* drives them out. If they have captured the soul, she recovers it if possible. This is initiated by incantation.
[782] *Nenechen* is prayed to and the *machi*'s familiars (*pillan*) are pressed into service through her power, or at least through her sensitivity and her ability to commune with them.

[753] Soul-loss, therefore, is considered the most serious of all illness, because especially strong power is needed to retrieve the soul from the hands of the *kalku* before it is contaminated and irrevocably lost. Protecting the soul from falling into the *kalku*'s power is a different kind of task, signalized by the recovery of
755 someone from a lesser illness. One case in which a *machi* failed
159 to retrieve the soul of her patient was described to me by a
756 forty-year-old man. I relate it below in much abbreviated form.

12: Faron E-4, 5 (1952-1954) 1964
SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

755
159
756

When I was young my sister became very sick and it was decided to have a machitun for her. The machi came one morning with her kultrun and bells. The thungulmachin carried the machi's remedies in his saddle bags, which he placed inside the door of our house. All the family was present. They all knew the machi. She came over to where I was sitting with my sister and talked to both of us. We knew her well, and often played with her children. She was a relative of my mother.

To find out the cause of illness, the machi prayed to her pillan to aid her. The pillan are her ancestors who used to be machi. From them she obtains her power to conquer the wekufe. They enter her body and tell her what is the cause of illness, and if it is possible to cure it. After a while the pillan entered the machi. She began to wail and the thungulmachin sat very close to her to hear her words. She began to shake all over and could not control her hands or arms. She dropped the kultrun into the fire by mistake, and the thungulmachin pulled it out quickly.

The machi talked in gasps. It was hard to hear her. She used many odd words, the way machi do. I could not understand much of what she said. She opened her eyes and lighted her pipe from the fire. She blew smoke over her hands and arms. Then she came over to where my sister was and lifted her covers and blew smoke all over her naked body.

Then the machi sat down at the fire, and the thungulmachin began to tell her what she said when she was possessed. He told her what herbs to use. He said that wekufe had stolen my sister's soul and that a kalku who lived in the mountains had it. He told her that she had to put the blade of her knife on her arms and legs before she mixed the remedy.

The machi still trembled from time to time. She placed the blade of the knife on her arms and she stopped trembling. Then she took cold water and mixed it with the herbs she had placed in her bowl. She rubbed this over my sister's body. This took about an hour. She stopped rubbing and started to beat her drum and sing over my sister.

Then she was possessed again. This lasted only a few minutes. The thungulmachin had to hold her or she would have collapsed into the fire. He told her that the girl would die. The machi told my father that she could not do any good, that she could not recover my sister's soul. She sat there for a long time. My father talked to her once in a while, but there was not much talking. Then she got up and went off. She rode off with the

12: Faron E-4, 5 (1952-1954) 1964
SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche

755 thungulmachin. She told my father that only the kalku could
752 reprieve the life of my sister, and that this was unlikely. She
159 said that she could do nothing, but that my father should call upon his own ancestors and ñenechen. Two days later my sister died.

761 When death occurs there is sometimes a desire on the part of
763 the deceased's closest relatives to determine its exact cause. Ex-
787 actness in such cases is within certain flexible limits. There is no way except through the intervention of shamans to find out the exact sorcerer, and even less chance that the exact evil-wisher, the *kalku*'s client, will be discovered. Divination in the form of autopsy, still practiced by the Mapuche, is therefore designed to comfort the living relatives by showing that death has been caused by some irresponsible force of evil. The following story points this up significantly. It was told me by the son of a *thungulmachin*.

My father was a thungulmachin, a machi's helper. He was her grandson and she taught him many things, because she loved him. He learned much from her and could often diagnose illness, but he had no power. He never tried to become a machi.

One time, after my great-grandmother died, my father was called upon to diagnose a case all by himself. It was the body of a
[553] dead little boy. His people were afraid that his spirit had been taken by a kalku, and that he might become an anchimallen, since he was still without a name [i.e. had not undergone the lakutun naming ceremony].

My father took his knife and cut open the boy's stomach, finding a ball of water inside after he withdrew the intestines. He said that showed the boy had been killed by an arumko [a water spirit]. The people were happy he had not been taken by a kalku. They paid my father well.

Bones, appendix, and liver are all used in determining supernatural causation, and divination results in fairly non-
[178] specific interpretation of this sort. *Machi* say that they do not perform autopsy often nowadays, although almost all of them claim to know how to interpret the signs, having learned to make these judgements during their training period. They say that people no longer demand that autopsies be made; that once